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ABSTRACT

Americans increasingly distrust their educational institutions and the people who work in them. This paper is about the salience of social trust in urban schools and its implication for school reform. The paper describes outcomes of a 5-year project that explored Chicago's (Illinois) attempt to use expanded local participation as a lever for school renewal. The research was based on the notion that the social qualities of trust, respect, and caring are integral to the operations of good urban schools. The paper examines three role relations critical for sustained school change: teacher-teacher, teacher-principal, and teacher-parent relations. Field-work data were gathered through interviews with the principal, selected Local School Council members, and observation. Empirical data were obtained from a survey of students and 1,462 teachers at 64 schools in a probability sample and a survey of students and 4,682 teachers in 206 schools in a volunteer sample. The paper argues that productive collective actions are more likely to occur when relational trust is present among organizational members. In the high-trust Chicago schools, a majority of teachers reported strong tendencies toward innovation. Relational trust creates an environment where individuals share a moral commitment to act in the interests of the collectivity, and this ethical basis for individual action constitutes a moral resource that the institution can draw upon to initiate and sustain change. Finally, relational trust must be founded on voluntary commitments. Contains 5 tables and 27 endnotes. (LMI)

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Social Trust:

A Moral Resource for School Improvement

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Social Trust: A Moral Resource for School Improvement

Increasingly, Americans distrust their educational institutions and the people who work in them (Davis and Smith, 1994; Johnson and Immerwahr, 1994).[1] This distrust reflects a belief that schools are inadequately fulfilling their responsibilities to educate the nation's children to be productive citizens. Despite some evidence to the contrary (Berliner and Biddle, 1996), these views appear widespread and deep. They now challenge the viability of public education as it has operated across the country for almost a century.

The importance of trust in our social institutions has received considerable attention recently. Social scientists have examined trust relations among individuals and social institutions (Gambetta, 1988; Dunn, 1990; Putnam, 1994; Fukuyama, 1995; Kramer and Tyler, 1996) and the incentives that motivate individuals to trust one another (Williamson, 1993; Hardin, 1995). Despite this recent flurry of activity, little work has been undertaken to investigate the nature of trust as a substantive property of an organization, nor to examine how trust levels vary among different organizations and how this, in turn, relates to the effectiveness of their individual operations (Tyler, 1994).

This chapter is about the salience of social trust in urban schools and its implication for school reform. Five years ago, we initiated a project to explore Chicago's attempt to use expanded local democratic participation as a lever for school renewal.[2] The Chicago School Reform Act of 1988 had launched an unprecedented effort to empower parents and community members, along with principals and teachers, in each of the 550 schools across the city. It was hoped that their collective efforts would transform what had been described as the "Worst School System in America."[3]

Even as we began this project, we recognized that we were studying a unique endeavor. There were few theoretical models and empirical studies to serve as a guide about how local efforts, focused around the increased engagement of parents with school professionals, might actually advance school reform. We suspected at the outset that a critical factor would be the ability of parents, teachers, and administrators to join together in sustained cooperative efforts around school improvement. We hypothesized that the

relationships formed among these groups could constitute a valuable resource in the reform process. Thus, our work began with the expectation that varying levels of social capital in school communities mattered. This interest in the social resources of a school community to support reform gradually evolved into a more specific focus on the role of social trust.

This chapter summarizes what we have learned. Specifically, we discuss the idea of social trust as a resource for school improvement. We elaborate the nature of this trust, the factors which facilitate its development and maintenance, and some key organizational consequences associated with it.

Background: The Urban School Context

The academic work of the school rests on a foundation of social relations among local school professionals and the parents and community the school is supposed to serve. Considerable changes in our society, especially in poor urban communities, have been systematically eroding this social foundation over the past several decades. (See, for example, Wilson, 1987). The deinstitutionalization of urban communities has made them much less hospitable for raising children. Escalating levels of violence, coupled with high levels of transience and mobility, tear at the basic social fabric that binds neighborhood residents together. In an earlier time this social fabric was a resource for child rearing.

At the same time, local school professionals have been largely uncoupled from the communities they are supposed to serve. A steady stream of federal, state, and local policies aimed at promoting desegregation have had the unintended consequence of distancing schools from the communities in which they are located. For example, almost 30 percent of Chicago elementary school students do not attend a neighborhood school. (At the high school level, the comparable figure is 50 percent.). Similarly, by a judicial consent decree, a massive redistribution of faculty was executed. Literally on one day, the ties of thousands of teachers to families and local communities were severed. A residue of social distance has been left in its wake which is now normative in many school communities. As a consequence, the social misalignments documented between urban school professionals and poor parents (see, for example, Comer, 1988) have been further exacerbated. Many urban school teachers have only weak ties at best to parents and the school community.

The story becomes even more complex when we take into account the simultaneous loss of agency on the part of the central office. Many of the major reform initiatives advanced in urban school districts during the 1980s failed. For example, a systemwide mastery learning curriculum in Chicago was ill conceived and poorly implemented. Similarly, a uniform retention policy promulgated by the Board of Education proved to be a disaster. The lack of confidence in the central office, generated by failed initiatives such as these, left many local school professionals cynical about the possibility that any reform might succeed and very uncertain about how, why, and whether they should even attempt to change.

At about the same time this project examining Chicago school reform was beginning, another project was ending. Bryk was completing a manuscript with Valerie Lee and Peter Holland on Catholic Schools and the Common Good (1993). Bryk et al. were puzzling over their conclusions—what made these schools really work? They were searching for the larger ideas that might tie together the numerous and diverse findings presented in the book. Eventually, they came to focus on the importance of trust relations in the effective functioning of Catholic schools, particularly urban schools. Bryk et al. argued that the parents in these schools depended on the professionals' judgment about what and how to teach and supported their efforts in this regard. The professionals, in turn, operated under a moral obligation to do what was best to advance the education and welfare of each child. A structure of moral commitments and mutual obligations had a profound impact on teachers' work efforts and satisfaction, and strengthened students' engagement with the school. This base of social trust shared among parents, students, and teachers was also of instrumental value to the organization, contributing to less contentious decision-making processes and more efficient school operations.

In combining these ideas about urban Catholic schools with our emerging observations from the Chicago field study, themes of respect, trust, and caring in school-based social relations became central to our work. We became convinced that these social qualities were integral to the operations of good urban schools and a major resource to a school community's efforts at reform.

Conceptualizing Trust

Trust has been recently discussed in the literature under the broader concept of social capital (Granovetter, 1985; Loury, 1987; Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995). The major theoretical work in this regard is credited to James S. Coleman (1988, 1990). According to Coleman, social capital is a property of the relational ties among individuals within a social system. Like human capital (Schultz, 1960), social capital is intangible and abstract, and is accumulated for productive ends. Whereas human capital is acquired through educational experiences (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1960), social capital is developed and sustained through relationships.

Coleman identifies two factors that can promote high levels of social capital: network closure and trustworthiness. Social network closure refers to the density of relationships that individuals within a network share in common. When there is a high degree of interconnectedness among individuals, it is easier for members to communicate with one another. This interconnectedness also makes it easy to readily correct miscommunications, which if left unaddressed, can lead over time to rifts and a breakdown of the network.

Coleman argued that social capital serves an important role in maintaining social norms. The dense relational ties in a network with high social capital transmit not only basic information, but may also act to monitor and enforce the mutual obligations among the parties. In such a network, socially desirable norms are advanced and undesirable actions sanctioned. This property of a social network is what Coleman termed trustworthiness.

In addition to his discussion of the network aspects of social trust, Coleman also considered this topic from the perspective of the actions of individual agents (Coleman, 1990). In this regard, Coleman drew on the work of rational choice theorists (e.g. Dawes, 1988; Hardin, 1993; Williamson, 1993) who have focused on the conditions and incentives that motivate individuals to trust one another, and on how individuals assess the potential benefits and losses associated with the actions they might take, given this uncertainty. From this perspective, trust constitutes a calculation whereby an individual decides whether or not to engage in an action with another-individual that incorporates some degree of risk. In turning to rational choice theory, Coleman sought to offer an explanation for the micro-level activity that undergirds the social functioning of effective networks.

The research discussed here views social trust as the collective property of a social institution. In this regard, we build on Coleman's ideas about trustworthiness in social networks. Unlike rational choice theorists, however, who rely exclusively on motives of self-interest and material gain to explain individual actions, we offer a more principalist and personalist account of this micro-behavior. We pay close attention to how individuals within organizations view the actions of others in the context of a set of mutual obligations which frame their relationships. Through a process of discernment, they lend meaning to those actions and ultimately come to trust (or not) others.[4]

Alternative Forms of Social Trust

As a property of a social institution, trust may take at least three different forms: organic, contractual, and relational (Gambetta, 1988). Organic trust is rooted in faith, and is ascribed to persons or institutions in a more or less unquestioning fashion. This form of trust is characteristic of small-scale societies. In such systems individuals give their trust unconditionally, for they believe in the absolute authority and/or character of the individuals with whom they are engaged. Organic trust creates a broad-based moral bond among members who share an ethical responsibility for the consequences of their behaviors to themselves and others.

Fundamentalist religious schools, such as those described by Peshkin (1986), exemplify social systems characterized by organic trust. Here the actions of professionals are supported by a community which embraces one truth, one way. Because the truth is beyond doubt, the community seeks the complete obedience of its members to the doctrine of its faith. This obedience is extended through the school whose objective is to vitalize in its daily life the precepts of the faith. The school is a "total institution," created and maintained to achieve the broad purpose of serving the glory of God.

The second type of trust is contractual. A contract explicitly defines the actions to be taken by the parties involved in the transaction. This, in turn, sits within a legal framework which binds individuals to carry out specified responsibilities. In contrast to organic trust, which can be virtually all encompassing, contractual trust is much more delimited, e.g. a scope of work to be undertaken or services to be delivered. Typically, the product to be

provided is clearly set out, and appropriate mechanisms for achieving this can also be reasonably well specified. As a result, it is relatively easy to ascertain whether all parties have acted in accordance with the agreed upon terms. If one party fails to uphold the terms of the contractual trust agreement, legal actions can be taken by the aggrieved party to seek redress.

The third type of trust is relational. This is formed through the mutual understandings that arise out of the sustained associations among individuals and institutions, each of whom is expected to behave in a normatively appropriate manner. Relational trust differs from organic and contractual trust in that its underlying expectations are founded both on beliefs and explicit expectations regarding obligations. Such trust is well suited for situations where organizational aims may be multi-faceted and/or difficult to clarify, and where the possible mechanisms through which these aims might be addressed may be highly varied and situationally specific.

Unlike contractual trust, relational trust can only be informally and infrequently monitored, and abrogations of such trust are not easily subject to legal redress. Rather, individuals typically withdraw their trust when expectations are violated, leading to a possible severing of ties with the institution or even to a breakdown in the institution itself. Also, unlike organic trust, which is more likely to be present in closed societies, relational trust is sustainable in the more delimited affiliations that characterize modern social institutions. For this reason, it seems particularly relevant for analyzing the nature of relationships among teachers, principals, parents, and students in schools.

Judgments about the intentionality of others play a central role in relational trust. As social interactions occur, participants attend not only to surface behavior, but they also seek to discern the underlying intentions that are likely to motivate the others' behavior and how these can be reconciled in the context of the mutual obligations understood among the parties. A parent, for example, may trust her child's teacher even if the outcome falls short of expectations, such as her child being the top reader in the class, if the parent perceives that the actions taken by the teacher are professionally appropriate and well intended.

This focus on intentions contrasts with organic trust, where it is simply presupposed that individuals and institutions will consistently act in ways believed to be right and good.

In these contexts, there is typically little need for discernment. Interestingly, intentions also play only a minor role in contractual trust relations where expectations are primarily outcome-based. In these cases, if the desired products are produced, the individual motives of participants are largely irrelevant.

Relational trust, however, is grounded in a personalistic account of action, where normative judgments are also made about how and why individuals go about the process of addressing their obligations. If desirable outcomes are advanced, but the processes by which they are addressed leave participants uncertain as to the real intentions of others, trustworthiness may not be achieved. For example, whether teachers embrace a reform or not depends in part on how they perceive their principal's motives in advocating change. Is the intent really to improve opportunities for the children, or rather to bring the principal public acclaim and perhaps a career advancement out of the school?

In sum, relational trust entails a dynamic interplay of actual behavior and a discernment of the intentions in the context of the obligations shared by various parties. Trust is diminished when individuals perceive that others are not acting in ways that manifest these common commitments. Thus, the fulfillment of obligations on which relational trust rests entails not only "doing the right thing," but also doing it for what is perceived to be the "right reasons."

Key Consequences of Social Trust

Recent research has focused on the significance of social trust in macro-level societal institutions.[5] Putnam (1994), for example, has analyzed its impact on democratic political activity; Fukuyama (1995) has focused on its contribution to economic prosperity. An important theme in this literature is the institutional efficiencies that derive as a result of social trust. This efficiency accrues through at least two different mechanisms. First, in high social trust organizations, there tends to be less conflict and members are predisposed to engage cooperatively in complex activities (Bryk et al., 1993). Broadly shared principles, reinforced by predictable actions, increase the confidence that organizational members have in each other, in their leadership, and in the collectivity. Consequently, fewer issues are likely to be contested.

Under these circumstances, institutional leaders tend to be granted wide discretion. With goodwill prevailing, members presume that the actions of the leadership are intended to advance the core purposes which everyone shares. Moreover, when real collective decision making is required, these processes are likely to be more expeditious. With core principles clearly established, decision making focuses mostly on the meaning of these principles for the particular matter at hand. This creates a more bounded conversation than when the principles themselves are also contested.

Second, the normative values accompanying high trust create an internal social control mechanism for the organization. Broadly understood role obligations offer a strong guide for practice. Moreover, since the norms are widely internalized, much of the organizational life becomes self-regulating. In addition, members share responsibility for the consequences of all individuals' behavior. As a result, they tend to spontaneously initiate corrective action in response to observed problems. Thus, in this second sense, the organization is also more efficient because there is less need for formal policing mechanisms. With a broad base of norms held in common, incidences of "shirking" and "free rider" problems are less prevalent (Olson, 1965).

In addition to these efficiency arguments previously documented in the literature, we argue in this paper that relational trust is a significant resource in times when major structural changes are needed. Typically, such circumstances place the organization in a state of disequilibrium as the status quo becomes contested. Even though change may be viewed by many of the members as necessary, how best to effect this and precisely what the changes should be are typically very uncertain. The need to break with routine and the ambiguity that accompanies this can heighten individual anxieties and can, in turn, create social tensions which may frustrate a successful change process.

It is important to note that the mutual obligations which undergird relational trust are grounded in a set of core principles that bound the organization. To effect structural change, these often tacit understandings must be drawn out, articulated as to their meaning for the current circumstances, and a new course of action publicly chosen. Established personal respect and trust among the parties allows genuine public conversation about such matters to be initiated and sustained over a period of time. In the end, the "newly clarified" principles

become ethically compelling, offering good reasons why individuals should act in a collectively desirable fashion. In catalyzing such productive action, social trust constitutes a moral resource to the organization.

A Theory of Relational Trust in Schooling

Our interest in the role of trust in school improvement developed through an extensive reading and rereading of field notes that included both in-depth interviews with key school and community actors and observations of local school council meetings in Chicago public schools.[6] Ideas about trust among these individuals appeared to be very important to understand how reform efforts proceeded. The interplay of the field note analysis with the theoretical ideas summarized above leads us to several elaborations on our basic concept of relational trust.

Ordered Social Qualities Embedded in Relational Trust

As noted earlier, trust involves more than just frequent communication across a social network. It also entails a distinct set of interpersonal qualities conveyed through actions. At the most basic level, relational trust is grounded in individual respect. This minimal quality, necessary for sustaining civil social interaction, implies a basic human regard for the personal dignity and worth of the other. Such respect needs to be reciprocated. It cannot be sustained over time without at least some mutuality.

In the context of schooling, respect involves a personal recognition among the parties of each other's role in children's education and engagement in meaningful civil discourse toward this end. A key behavior in this regard is hearing and acknowledging each other. "Listening to what I have to say," marks the basis for genuine social interaction.

In many local school council meetings that we observed, the communication among individuals was often regulated through formal parliamentary procedures. The respect attained here may grant someone a right to speak, but it does not necessarily mean that anyone who is present really attends to what is said. This is quite different from a "respect" that leads to trust, which entails that individuals listen to what each other has to "say" and in

some fashion take what is said into account. In such interactions the concerns and contributions of all those involved are noticed, appreciated, and subsequently acted upon.

This notion of behavior that takes into account the perspective of others identifies a distinctive feature of relational trust—an expectation of conformable action. We argue that relational trust requires that the expectations among the members of a social network or organization be regularly validated by behaviors which are interpretable in the context of assumed obligations. For example, a parent expects that a teacher will take the necessary actions to help her child learn to read. The teacher feels obligated to work in a professionally appropriate manner and is willing to commit extra effort, if necessary, in seeking to respond to the parent's expectations. The parent, in turn, is obligated to support the teacher's efforts at home. If actual classroom practice appears to be inconsistent with these expectations, parents are likely to withdraw their support. Similarly, when the expected parental support is absent, the teacher's sense of responsibility may become more circumscribed. In either case, the trust relationship is likely to break down.

In organizations such as schools, the obligations among the parties, however, are diffuse in scope, rather than based on explicit expectations about specific service provisions. In such circumstances, it is often difficult for individuals to validate that the party in whom they have vested their trust is actually fulfilling their obligations. Parents cannot be completely sure, for example, that in the privacy of their classrooms teachers are fully carrying out their responsibilities to educate their children. Nor can teachers be entirely sure that the parents at home are positively supporting the teachers' role in the schooling process.

This functional characteristic of social interactions means that the expectations held by various parties are not solely outcome-based. Participants also focus on what other individuals are attempting to do (as well as the consequences of these actions) and why they appear to be doing it. In this regard, a discernment of the intentions of others is central to the functioning of relational trust. In the context of schooling, individuals seek to discern whether manifest behavior is motivated by concerns for what is right, good, and fair in terms of the education and care of children. For example, the staff and parents in a school may judge the principal to be a good leader, even if the school does not reach high standards of

academic performance, because the principal's efforts are interpreted as expressing concern for the community and its children.

Finally, in its most intimate form, relational trust draws us toward notions about caring.[7] Inherent in a trust relationship is some degree of vulnerability. This is especially so in the context of asymmetric relations, such as those between poor parents and local school professionals. Lacking the specialized knowledge needed to advance their children's own education, poor parents are especially dependent upon the good efforts of school faculties. A recognition of this vulnerability by the superordinate party (i.e., teachers in this instance) and a conscious commitment to relieve the uncertainty and ill-ease that it creates in the subordinate party (i.e., the parents) can lead to a very intense and meaningful personal bond between them.

An individual's trust in another deepens when the individual assesses the intentions of the other as extending beyond what is formally required in a given situation. That is, a teacher who embodies a caring commitment toward students internalizes obligations more encompassing and diffuse than is typically specified in collective bargaining agreements or school board work rules. Their life commitments elevate the concerns of others—to care for them in the sense of "agape"—and thereby intensify the relational ties between the parties. This occurs, for example, when teachers take a personal interest and involvement in children's lives and/or engage themselves in the community where their students live. Such actions derive from a deep, ethical imperative to do what is good and right toward advancing the full development of children. When parents and students perceive this ethical basis of teachers' work, and acknowledge and respond to it in an appreciative and supporting manner, a moral force is created in their social dynamic. This is the micro-level manifestation of relational trust as a moral resource for action.

Role Relational Specificity

Strong norms anchor social trust. In this regard, Putnam (1994) focused specifically on the role of generalized reciprocity in sustaining democratic political relations. According to Putnam, there are two forms of reciprocity: balanced or specific, and generalized or diffuse. Balanced reciprocity refers to exchanges of equivalent value at a particular point in time, as

when students exchange gifts at holiday time. Generalized reciprocity refers to a continuing relationship of exchange which at any given time may be imbalanced, but involves the expectation that this imbalance will be repaid in the future. For example, in an elementary school, playground duty is shared among a group of fifth grade teachers. One of the teachers cannot supervise the playground on her designated day and asks another teacher in the group to cover for her. The colleague who picks up the extra day of supervision expects that this favor will be repaid if she finds herself in a similar position.

The centrality of generalized reciprocity as a normative base for social trust is rooted in assumptions about the exchangeability of roles among individuals within a network. Stated quite simply, "Someday you might stand in my shoes and I anticipate that you would do for me what I am now doing for you." This exchangeability concept is quite appropriate, for example, in thinking about citizens in a democratic polity, as was Putnam's problem. Similarly, it is appropriate for describing symmetric organizational roles, such as relationships among teachers in schools. However, not all school-based relations are symmetric. As noted above, this does not characterize the relations between poor parents and teachers; nor does it represent the relations between teachers and school administrators.[8] Given the asymmetry of these relations and the concomitant differentiated obligations created among the parties, the normative basis takes on a role relational specificity.

In noting this non-symmetry, however, we also must clarify that we are concerned about situations quite different from the more absolute power relations found in a traditional patron-client arrangement (Putnam, 1995). In our cases of non-symmetry, both parties remain vulnerable to each other. Even though principals, for example, may have formal organizational authority over the school, they still need teachers' support for the school to function effectively. More generally, each party needs to support the efforts of the other in order to maximize both individual interests and the collective goods that can derive from a high trust enterprise (Fukuyama, 1995).

This paper examines three role relations critical for sustained school change: teachers with their colleagues, with the school principal (and other administrators), and with parents. As a form of shorthand, we refer below to these as teacher-teacher, teacher-principal, and teacher-parent relations. We note that we deliberately decided not to focus on teachers

relations with students for two reasons. First, our substantive focus on structural change naturally directs attention toward the adults. While students are obviously important school actors, operational change is primarily an "adult game." Second, as Bidwell (1968) notes, the significance of students in discussions about school trust varies across grade levels. As students progress through school, they gradually become more independent actors with significant responsibility for their own education and thus more central to a discussion of this sort. In the context of elementary schools, which is the focus of this study, the salience of this trust relation is more limited. Here student-teacher trust operates primarily through parent-teacher trust, in which students are the implied "third" party.[9]

Teacher-teacher relations. Efforts to promote a more common sense of purpose among a faculty (Kruse, Seashore-Lewis, and Bryk, 1994) require teachers to make their practice public and to be self-critical. More than just cordial relations are demanded if a genuine sharing of work is to occur. Such actions necessitate a high level of trust in one's colleagues which are grounded in certain predictabilities: "my colleagues understand my situation, they empathize with my problems, and they recognize that we share common dilemmas." That is, a generalized reciprocity undergirds true collegial relations within a faculty. Anchoring such norms are common principles that shape teachers' work about such matters as what students should learn, how instruction should be conducted, and how adults and students should behave. Several conditions can prevent this from occurring.

The first concerns a lack of consensus about what constitutes good teaching. This can be traced back to teacher training programs, which have been criticized for lacking a coherent philosophical base. The research literature on effective teaching also offers little consensus in this regard and there is a high degree of uncertainty about what any findings might mean in the context of a specific teaching situation. Even very good teachers, for example, express doubts about their practice (Lampert, 198x). This pedagogic uncertainty among teachers may also be amplified by basic demographic differences including age, race, and gender.

The second derives from the organizational structure of schools. In many schools, teachers are isolated and have few opportunities to interact with their colleagues. Grade level differences between primary and middle school teachers, and departmental specializations also contribute to the lack of social interaction. Without a structure that facilitates sustained

teacher conversations through teams or other forms of cooperative exchange, there may be few opportunities for the teachers to work out differences and enlarge a common set of understandings.

Third, school faculties are not usually assembled with the specific purpose of creating pedagogical coherence. Teaching slots are routinely filled based on individuals holding the appropriate teaching certificate and in accordance with concerns about seniority rights. The idea of a faculty as a deliberately formed instructional team, or as a "high performing work group," simply does not enter into the equation.

In contrast, one could imagine a deliberately formed group of teachers who engage in intensive, sustained deliberations regarding curricular content and practice. (For a real example, see the case study by Raywid in Louis and Kruse, 1994). To be sure, in most schools teachers do interact with one another, but in highly circumscribed ways. Frequently in our field notes, teachers reported instances in which they had collaborated with their colleagues regarding what textbooks should be purchased or which units of instruction should be covered in each grade. While these examples clearly demonstrated instances of cooperation, such behavior typically did not extend much beyond a very delimited set of tasks.

Teacher-principal relations. Although principals are obviously concerned about the children in their schools, their interests in this regard are not as immediate as those of the teachers. As the formal authority in the school, the principal's basic relationship with the teachers centers around the former's control over school resources that are critical to teachers' work. The combination of a principal's isolation from the direct work of teachers, and the uncertain technology associated with instruction, does not lend itself easily to a system of direct principal supervision. Principals have to trust that teachers will make good efforts at advancing student learning. Teachers, in return, expect fairness, adequate resources, and professional empathy from their principal. This constitutes the basis for the reciprocal obligations that undergird this relation.

Teachers expressed statements of distrust toward their principal when they felt they had little input into decision making, especially in areas that they believed were their primary domain, such as curriculum and instruction. Being excluded from key decisions called forth

feelings of alienation and tended to promote a lack of support for new initiatives. In contrast, in places where trust for the principal was high, teachers and staff commented on how the principal helped to establish, through words and actions, a school culture where teachers are respected and professionalism is embraced. At the most basic level, teachers are dependent upon the principal to create time in the schedule for arranging opportunities for teachers to interact with other teachers and parents. Without regular occasions for such social interactions, trust relations can neither be developed nor sustained.

Another trust issue for teachers centered around "getting things done." Teachers expected the principal to provide the resources they needed, to maintain order in the school, and to support them in dealing with disruptive student behavior. A principal's not taking action on such issues fostered distrust among the teachers. More generally, when the principal displayed an inability to strategize, follow through, and achieve results, the staff articulated an uneasiness about their school leadership.

We also observed principals playing a key role in schools where significant disagreements had emerged over school improvement. In some circumstances, principals deliberately sought to keep individuals from forming alliances in opposition to their point of view. They purposely aimed to fragment and isolate faculty and parents, thereby keeping them from coalescing as a group. Bryk et al. (1993) document numerous instances of such autocratic principal actions under Chicago School Reform. Not surprisingly, the level of social trust in these schools is low (Sebring, Bryk, and Easton, 1995). In contrast, Sebring et al. (1995) report that a facilitative, inclusive style of principal leadership supports more productive school improvement efforts and also predicts positive trust relations.

Finally, these observations about school administration generalize to the larger governance apparatus external to schools. Teachers voiced concerns in our interviews that the directives promulgated by centralized bodies, such as the Board of Education, do not fulfill the obligations implied in the trust relationship between employer and employee. Although the type of support teachers expected from the central administration is more delimited than the support of the parents and the principal, a lack of such support can still have serious repercussions. Without sufficient assistance to implement central initiatives, teachers find themselves with new responsibilities that they are unable to execute effectively. When

teachers fail to meet these expectations, a challenge is raised to their expertise which may, in turn, undermine their authority with the parents and students.

Teacher-parent relations. We have already noted that there is a strong asymmetry in teacher-parent relations. In general, poor parents typically do not have the educational expertise and skills that teachers have to help children learn. This imbalance in knowledge places a poor parent in a subordinate status with her child's teacher, especially when determining what specific actions should be taken at school and at home to improve the child's learning. The establishment of trusting relationships in such a situation often depends on the initiative of the teacher, who recognizes this inequality, and the sense of vulnerability it breeds, and seeks to ameliorate it. In contrast, if the teacher does not attempt to bridge a respectful relationship between the parents and herself, feelings of intimidation and alienation may fester.

In return, teachers expect parental support for their work. At a minimum, this entails assuring that children attend school regularly and arrive ready to learn. It means parental assistance and support if classroom behavior problems emerge. Particularly at the primary level, where the school is literally an extension of the family, teachers expect to be acknowledged as having a special role in a child's life, akin to that of an extended family member. In general, good teaching "touches the soul" and is a very personal and intimate undertaking.[10] With all the current talk about professionalism, it is important to remember that teachers are human, that their humanness is very much a part of their practice, and that they respond to basic social amenities like everyone else.

Empirical Evidence on Key Propositions

The empirical work in this study focuses on the quality of core social relations in schools that form the foundation for student learning. We demonstrate that teachers respond to a set of survey questions about respect, trust, and caring in their social relations consistent with the argument developed above that these three qualities form a relational hierarchy. We also show that social trust varies substantially across schools, and we examined how a range of contextual, structural, and normative factors sustain or inhibit such trust. Finally, we evaluate the consequences of these trust relations on teachers' engagement with parents,

efforts at innovation, and collective work commitments. Each of these constitutes an important facet in comprehensive school reform.

Sample

As part of an ongoing effort to examine the progress of Chicago School Reform, the Consortium on Chicago School Research undertook in the Spring of 1994 a survey of elementary and secondary schools to investigate: 1) students' learning opportunities, motivation and engagement, their views of the school environment, and their parents' involvement in their education; and 2) teachers' views of governance, instructional practices, opportunities for growth, and the professional community in their schools (Sebring et al., 1995). The student survey was administered during a regular class period by classroom teachers. Questionnaires were available in both English and Spanish with teachers determining which version should be given to each student. The teacher survey was generally conducted in a regularly scheduled faculty meeting. The data in this paper use information from the elementary school teacher surveys.

A probability school sample, stratified by percent low income students and geographic location, was drawn. As a check on possible non-response bias, data from the student and teacher surveys were compared with information from the Chicago Public Schools' universe data files regarding race, gender, percent of low income students, years of teaching experience, and teachers' highest degree. Analyses of these two files indicate that representativeness was achieved (Sebring et al., 1995).

In addition to the probability sample, all other schools in Chicago were invited to participate in the study. Thus, there are two groups of schools, a probability sample and a volunteer sample. Descriptive analyses on these two groups indicate that overall they had similar characteristics. The volunteer sample did show, however, slightly more positive results on some outcomes of interest (See Sebring et al., 1995, for a description of how items varied between the two groups). To adjust for this selection effect, a control for "sample type" is introduced in the analyses below. Table 1 details the numbers of schools and teachers in both the sampled and volunteer groups.

Table 1

Elementary School Sample

	Probability Sample	Volunteer Sample	Total
Schools	64	206	270
Teachers	1,462	4,682	6,144

Definitions of Variables

Measuring Trust. We identified in the Consortium surveys a set of items regarding respect, trust, and caring for each relation of interest—teacher-parent, teacher-principal, and teacher-teacher. The items pertaining to each relation were then analyzed using a Rasch rating scale analysis (Wright & Masters, 1982). In general, a school might maintain somewhat different levels of trust across these various relations. We would not, however, expect gross discrepancies.

Three types of statistics are reported below for each Rasch measure. The first is item difficulty, which estimates the likelihood that respondents will endorse the position, attitude, or behavior represented by each item within a scale. For example, common events, attitudes, and beliefs are "less difficult" to endorse; rarer ones are "more difficult." Second is item infit, which is the degree to which individuals respond to a particular item consistent with its placement in a hierarchically ordered scale. For a properly fitting item, individuals who endorse that item are more likely to endorse the easier, "less difficult" items below it in the scale, and are not as likely to endorse the items that are harder or "more difficult" and above it in the scale. Third is person reliability, which is a measure of the internal consistency of the scale items and is similar to Cronbach's alpha.

(i) Teacher-principal trust. Table 2 displays items contained in the teacher-principal trust scale. The respect item has the lowest difficulty coefficient (-.77).[11] Of all of the items comprising the scale, this one is most frequently endorsed by teachers. Trust per se is in the

middle of the scale (.10), and the caring items [i.e., the belief that the principal is personally concerned about their welfare (.25), and the willingness of the individual to share personal concerns with the principal (1.02)] have the highest difficulty levels. That is, the caring items are the least likely to be endorsed by teachers. The conceptual ordering of this scale is consistent with our theoretical model, in that respect undergirds trust, and trust in its broadest realization merges into caring. Moreover, since the infit mean square statistics hover around 1.0, this indicates that most teachers' responses to this set of items are consistent with the hypothesized hierarchical structure.[12]

Table 2

Rasch Scale of Teacher-Principal Trust

Item	Difficulty	Infit Mean Square
It's OK in this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with the principal.[a]	1.02	1.08
The principal looks out for the personal welfare of the faculty members.[a]	.25	.77
I trust the principal at her word.[a]	.10	.99
The principal has confidence in the expertise of the teachers.[a]	-.16	.96
The principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of the teachers.[a]	-.44	.94
To what extent do you feel respected by your principal?[b]	-.77	1.18
Person Reliability	.85	

Notes:

[a] Four-point scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree.

[b] Four-point scale: Not at all to a great extent.

(ii) Teacher-teacher and teacher-parent trust. The teacher-teacher and teacher-parent trust scales generally order in a similar fashion to the teacher-principal scale, although the interpretations here are somewhat more complex. (See Tables 3 and 4.) In both the teacher-teacher and teacher-parent scales, some questions begin with the stem, "how many teachers in this school..." Others ask "to what extent...," and still others are likert-scaled items, as in the teacher-principal measure. This mixing of three different item types makes it more difficult to establish the precise hierarchical location of the various items that comprise the scale. The ordering of the items within each response type is hierarchical. The interweaving of the response types is substantively arbitrary, depending in part upon the relative number of the categories in each item type. Thus, we must look at the hierarchical ordering within each subset respectively.

Table 3 displays the items for the teacher-teacher trust scale. Four likert-scaled items constitute the majority of the measure. At the bottom of the scale is cordiality, which is the most basic social quality needed to sustain civil relations. Next comes respect (i.e., Teachers respect other teachers...). Caring and trust are reversed in this measure, however, with trust at the very top of the scale. Table 4 presents the teacher-parent trust scale items. Again, the respect items appear easiest to agree with and anchor the bottom end of the scale. The top four items again represent a mix of caring and trust.

In general, the infit statistics for both measures indicate that most teachers do respond to these item sets in a hierarchically ordered fashion. The bottoms of the scales emphasize respect and cordiality, while the tops of the scales focus on trust and caring. Considering that the items used here are from a general purpose survey, and were not specifically formulated with the benefit of our field observation analyses, we judge these results to be reasonably consistent with our theory. The rating scale analyses tend to support the idea of relational trust as a hierarchically ordered set of social qualities.

Table 3

Rasch Scale of Teacher-Teacher Trust

Item	Difficulty	Infit Mean Square
Teachers in this school trust each other.[a]	1.95	.83
It's OK in this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with other teachers.[a]	.96	1.12
Teachers respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts.[a]	.26	.99
How many teachers in this school really care about each other?[b]	-.33	.81
To what extent do you feel respected by other teachers?[c]	-1.39	1.20
Most teachers in this school are cordial.[a]	-1.45	.86
Person Reliability	.85	

Notes:

[a] Four-point scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree.

[b] Five-point scale: none, some, about half, most, nearly all.

[c] Four-point scale: not at all to a great extent.

Table 4

Rasch Scale of Teacher-Parent Trust

Item	Difficulty	Infit Mean Square
How many teachers in this school feel good about parents' support for their work?[a]	.92	1.06
Parents have confidence in the expertise of the teachers.[b]	.31	.85
How many teachers in this school really care about this local community?[a]	.29	1.02
Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents.[b]	.03	1.13
To what extent do teachers in this school respect parents and community members of the local school community?[c]	-.05	.85
To what extent do teachers in this school respect students' parents?[c]	-.44	.74
To what extent do you feel respected by students' parents?[c]	-1.06	1.29
Person Reliability	.80	

Notes:

[a] Five-point scale: none, some, about half, most, nearly all.

[b] Four-point scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree.

[c] Four-point scale: not at all to a great extent.

Organizational outcomes. We hypothesized that schools with high levels of trust produce a set of conditions conducive to broad-based school improvement. To investigate these effects, we constructed four other scales from the teacher surveys: teachers' school commitment, orientation toward innovation, teachers' outreach to parents, and collective responsibility among teachers for student welfare. Each measure is described briefly below. See Appendix A for the full statistical details.

The commitment scale examines teachers' personal loyalty to their school, interest in continuing to work there, and a willingness to speak well of the school to others. Such attitudes and behaviors are essential to a sustained, long-term organizational improvement effort.[13]

Our second outcome is teachers' orientation to innovation. This indicates whether teachers are continually learning and seeking new ideas, have a "can do" attitude, and are encouraged to change. In schools where there is a high degree of trust among the local school professionals, "risk taking" becomes safe, and we would expect that teachers would more readily engage in these behaviors.[14] We found in our field studies that, absent such trust, teachers were less willing to openly discuss their weaknesses with colleagues and make changes to improve their own pedagogical techniques. These observations are important because other extant research on school change (e.g., Louis and Miles, 1990; Fullan, 1991) document this orientation as an important pre-condition for school change.

The teachers' outreach to parent scale was designed to measure the school's effort to forge common goals and understandings with parents and to work together to strengthen student learning. These items tap teachers' efforts to work closely with parents to meet

student needs, encourage parents to visit classrooms, and provide opportunities for parents and community members to voice concerns about the schools. We would expect that in schools where teachers trust parents, they would be more willing to work with them over common interests. In contrast, when trust is low, we would expect teachers to be more protective and less willing to engage parents. Again, this, too, taps another critical dimension of urban school improvement. It is widely held that greater parental involvement is necessary to advance student learning. (See, for example, Comer, 1988).

The last scale, teachers' collective responsibility for student welfare, was designed to measure the extent of a shared commitment among the faculty to create a school environment where all students can learn. The items used here measure the degree to which teachers perceive that their colleagues care about their students and feel responsible for their academic and social development. Schools high on collective responsibility would be characterized as places where a significant proportion of the teachers share a deep commitment to the students, reaching even beyond basic achievement and orderly behavior.[15]

Facilitating factors. We hypothesized that a number of key contextual factors facilitate the development and sustenance of trust. Our field research analyses suggest that a principal's leadership and managerial style play an important role in this regard. Teachers and parents respond positively to a principal who reaches out to others and fosters broad participation in the school and its improvement efforts. In addition, a principal's managerial expertise also matters. Principals who are actively engaged with instruction and who closely monitor the school environment to support learning engender high levels of trust. When schools are well managed, parents and teachers can count on "things getting done." We have

included in the analyses two measures that tap these different aspects of principal behavior. (See Appendix A for more detail.)

Small school size is another key facilitating factor. In small schools it is easier to maintain frequent communication and informal relations across a social network comprised of school staff and parents. In the absence of these conditions, misunderstandings can occur which are harder to correct, and which, in turn, undermine trust. More generally, a growing body of research now documents the importance of organizational scale on the social engagement of teachers and students and the effectiveness of school change efforts.[16]

We also hypothesized that in school communities with more stable student populations, positive trust relations are easier to maintain, especially between parents and teachers. As noted in our literature review, social trust is built up over time through sustained social interactions. Although the reputations of individual school leaders can maintain trust in unstable social networks, we expect, nonetheless, that such instability will tend to tax the overall level of network trust and ultimately undermine it.

Trust, particularly between parents and teachers, should also be much easier to sustain in schools with demonstrated effectiveness. That is, parental trust of professionals should be higher in schools where there is independent, objective evidence that students are learning. Thus, we expect that the overall achievement level of a school is another factor in maintaining trust.

Finally, the absence of racial and ethnic tensions, which are a special concern in many urban schools, makes it easier to maintain social trust. In the context of a long history of segregation and racism, such attitudes remain prevalent in some urban school communities.

Under these circumstances, it is natural to interpret any misunderstanding and miscommunication along racial lines. Maintaining a broad base of trust is not likely in such situations.[17]

School, teacher, and student controls. We introduced in the analyses a number of school-level variables that control for aspects of student composition, including race and ethnicity mix, and the proportion of students from low income families. We also considered in preliminary analyses a range of variables derived from Census Block Group information that was geo-coded by the Consortium onto student records. This included information about neighborhood poverty, education levels, percent single family households, and employment. None of these variables, however, explained significant variation in the organizational outcomes, given the other factors already included in the model.

For teacher-level covariates, we included basic individual characteristics, such as race and ethnicity and gender. Since teacher responses may also depend upon their status and role within the organization, we included grade level taught and years of experience in the school. We also created a measure of the amount of time a teacher spends on school governance, curricular matters, and attending school extracurricular events. We view this willingness to spend extra time on school affairs as a behavioral indicator of a teacher's overall positive attachment to the school. This variable functions in our analysis as an omnibus teacher-level control which might generally influence a teacher's responses on all survey items.

Results

Does relational trust vary between schools? Since we have posited that trust is an organizational property, the first critical empirical test is whether our trust measures vary among schools. For this purpose we conducted a three-level hierarchical linear model (HLM) analysis that decomposes the variability in teachers' survey responses into measurement error, variation among teachers in the schools, and between school variance.[18] In general, the proportion of variance between schools is about 30%, with the greatest between-school variance, 34%, occurring for teacher-parent trust. Clearly, a substantial portion of the variability in teachers' reports about trust relations is between schools.[19] These results indicate that there are significant differences between schools in how teachers perceive their work environments, lending credibility to treating relational trust as an organizational property. In fact, the amount of between school variability here is greater than for any other school-level indicators developed to date using these Consortium data (Sebring, Bryk, and Easton, 1995).

Effects of facilitating factors on relational trust. We next undertook a full multilevel analysis of the effects of the hypothesized facilitating factors on relational trust while simultaneously controlling for school, teacher, and student composition factors. We again conducted three-level HLM analyses, where the level-1 outcome variables are the three measures of trust relations, level 2 incorporates teacher predictors, and at level 3 are school composition predictors and facilitating factors. Key findings are summarized below. For further details, see Bryk and Schneider (in preparation).

As expected, principal leadership was associated with the positive trust relations, especially for teacher-principal trust. This supports our field observations that a facilitative and inclusive principal style, which actively seeks to involve teachers and parents in the school, enhances the formation and sustenance of trust. Through their day-to-day words and actions, principals can lay the groundwork for relational trust and enable collective action.[20] Similarly, we found significant effects for principal supervision on both teacher-teacher and teacher-parent trust, lending credence to the argument that good school management is also central to trusting social relations.

Our results also indicate that small school size is an important facilitating factor. Elementary schools with less than 350 students report more positive trust relations among teachers and between teachers and parents. Given the smaller size of the social networks, it is much easier to maintain personal and informal relations among professionals and with parents. This affords more positive conditions for forming and sustaining trust than in large schools where more distant and bureaucratic relations tend to abound.

We also found that both student stability and average school achievement significantly predict teacher-parent trust, but not the other two trust relations. The stability of a student population conditions the nature of the relationships that teachers can have with parents. Teachers in schools with stable student bodies have more opportunities to develop and sustain meaningful interactions with the parents of their students. It would not be unusual, for example, for someone who has taught in a stable school community to have been the classroom teacher for several children from the same family. In contrast, a stable student population is not particularly relevant to the formation of teacher-teacher trust, which depends

primarily on generalized reciprocity among colleagues, nor would we expect school stability to be predictive of teacher-principal trust, which is grounded in dyadic professional relations.

Similarly, as noted earlier, test scores are the one objective indicator of a school's effectiveness that is readily accessible to external groups such as parents, who otherwise may be unsure about how much to trust their child's school. Professionals, on the other hand, typically have more firsthand experiences and are less likely to rely on such data. As we expected, we found a stronger relationship of test scores with parent-teacher trust.

Also as expected, the presence of racial/ethnic tensions among the faculty clearly marked out schools with low levels of relational trust. Previous analyses of these Consortium data found that racial conflicts were more prevalent in schools that enrolled multiple racial/ethnic groups and where no one group dominated.[21] In such contexts, there are multiple racial/ethnic divisions, each of which has the potential for fomenting social distrust. Thus, it is not unexpected that teachers report weak trust relations across the board in schools that share these characteristics.

In general, the school level models explain much of the variability for both teacher-principal trust (89%) and teacher-teacher trust (73%). The model works less well for teacher-parent trust (31%). Presumably there are characteristics external to the school, perhaps in the parents themselves, that account for these differences.

Effects of relational trust on core conditions for reform. The major hypothesis of our research is that relational trust affects core conditions for school reform. Specifically, we expect that when trust relations exist among teachers, parents, and the school principal, teachers will be more likely to: express strong commitments to their particular school

community, actively reach out to engage parents, be willing to innovate to improve their teaching, and collectively express responsibility for the education and welfare of all students. We examined these hypothesized effects using as outcome variables the four measures of teachers' commitments discussed above. The analyses involved estimating the effects of relational trust on the four core conditions, controlling for, or "net of," the effects of measurement error in the outcome and the other teacher and school-level factors discussed above. We again summarize below our basic findings.

Across the board, teacher-teacher, teacher-parent, and teacher-principal trust were positively related to all four reform orientations—school commitment, orientation to innovation, outreach to parents, and collective responsibility. These effects were particularly strong for the latter two measures. In general, the trust effects were among the largest school level effects estimated in the analyses, even after controlling for other closely related concepts, such as the presence of racial conflict in the school and the principal's role as a facilitative, inclusive leader. In this regard, our estimates of the trust effects probably underestimate the true importance of trust relations because we deliberately structured a conservative analysis in order to create a rigorous test of our primary hypothesis.

In general, our statistical analyses strongly support our field work observations. The level of adult trust relations in a school is a very significant factor in how teachers view their workplace. Positive social relations are a genuine resource to school improvement.

In order to illustrate better the substantive meaning of our statistical results, we engage in a hypothetical experiment. Suppose that we consider two Chicago Public Schools that are average in all regards (including teacher characteristics, school composition, and structural

features), except that one school has low social trust and the second is characterized by high social trust. What substantive impact would this difference have on teachers' reform orientations?

To investigate this, we evaluated the predicted impact of a shift from a low social trust (-1 s.d.) to a high social trust (+1 s.d.) condition.[22] The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Social Trust Effect on Teachers' Reform Orientations

	Predicted Percentile Low Social Trust School	Predicted Percentile High Social Trust School
School Commitment	31	69
Orientation to Innovation	25	75
Outreach to Parents	16	84
Student Welfare	16	84

The effects on teachers' orientations are substantial indeed. In general, the shift from a low to a high social trust environment would move a school from the bottom quartile to the top

quartile on orientation to innovation, outreach to parents, and student welfare. Similar, although somewhat smaller, differences are also reported by teachers regarding the level of commitment to their current school. To make the implications of these results even more concrete, we compared the actual distribution of teachers' responses in the top and bottom quarters of Chicago elementary schools on each of these four measures, respectively. For illustrative purposes, Figure 1 displays the results for orientation to innovation; similar differences also occurred for the other three measures.[23]

In the top quarter of Chicago elementary schools, almost two-thirds of the teachers (63%) reported strong tendencies toward innovation.[24] Teachers in these highly rated schools typically indicated on the survey that "all" teachers were "willing to take risks and eager to try new ideas." They also "strongly agreed" that "teachers have a 'can do' attitude," that "teachers are encouraged to stretch and grow," and that teachers in this school "are continually learning." Another 31% reported a moderate tendency toward innovation in their school. Teachers in this group "agreed" that "teachers are encouraged to stretch and grow" and are "continually learning." They also indicated that at least "some" teachers are "eager to try new ideas," but disagree that "teachers have a 'can do' attitude." Only 6% of the teachers indicated no tendency toward innovation. This small minority see "none" of their colleagues as "eager to try new ideas" and also "disagree" with all other statements that comprise this scale.

This pattern of teacher survey responses on the innovation scale is what we would expect to find in high social trust Chicago schools (but which are average in all other regards). In contrast, in low social trust contexts, teachers' responses are more likely to be

those found in the bottom quarter of the Chicago elementary schools. Here, only 15% of the teachers report a strong orientation toward innovation (i.e., are eager to try new ideas, take risks, and engage change both on the part of their colleagues, as well as themselves), and over a third (36%) report no tendency toward innovation whatsoever!

Clearly, these two groups of schools represent very different contexts for school change. The implications seem clear. In the presence of high social trust, innovation seems very likely. Absent that social trust, it seems very difficult and perhaps impossible.

Discussion

Problems of collective action pervade organizational life. Organizations cannot recognize and reward every cooperative act nor detect and punish each failure to act. This is especially true in loosely coupled organizations, such as schools, where the basic work tasks and core technology do not lend themselves easily to regular, direct supervision. Effective operations in such situations depend largely on the willingness of individuals to engage voluntarily in behavior that advances collective aims. Social trust among the parties is a key resource in this regard.

This paper has focused on the role of social trust as an organizational property. We have argued that productive collective actions are more likely to occur when relational trust is present among organizational members. This relational trust is anchored in a set of shared principles that frame the core organizational aims and that are enlivened through daily social relations which embody a genuine human regard for others. Relational trust develops and is sustained when individuals can discern that the actions of others are appropriate in the context

of the reciprocal obligations held among various members. In the process of fullfilling their respective obligations, self interests are moderated and a catalyst for advancing the common good is enabled. That is, relational trust creates an environment where individuals share a moral commitment to act in the interests of the collectivity. It sustains an ethical imperative among organizational members to do what is right and good, broadly defined. This ethical basis for individual action constitutes a moral resource which the institution can draw upon to initiate and sustain change.

In conclusion, we note that the instruments for building this collective will cannot be coercive. Relational trust is founded on voluntary commitments. We have seen in our field studies numerous examples of principals facilitating the engagement of a broad base of school community members in a change process.[25] Teachers, parents, and community representatives have freely given much of their time and efforts, and in the course of these activities they have nurtured a relational trust among themselves

External policy can, however, provide assistance in this regard. While a policy cannot regulate or order relational trust, it can create conditions more conducive to its development and nurture its sustenance. Such a policy would focus on unleashing the social potential in collectivities as levers for change. We worry that if school reform continues to require heroic individual action, major improvements are likely to be in short supply.[26] Reform must be possible for ordinary people to accomplish within ordinary time commitments. Perhaps the most significant lesson to emerge to date from Chicago school reform is that policy can have exactly this effect.[27]

Endnotes

1. Recent statistics from the General Social Survey (GSS), conducted annually with some exceptions for the past twenty years on a stratified national random sample of adults, indicate that Americans reported the lowest level of confidence in their educational institutions in 1993 and the next lowest in 1994. (Unpublished tabulations, Tom Smith, 1996.)

2. This project titled "School Reform: Chicago Style," was funded by the Spencer Foundation. A more general description of this work can be found in the AERA document, " ."

3. This quote came from a judgment offered by then-U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett during a brief visit to Chicago in 1988 during the mobilization for school reform. [See Squires (1988).] Hess (1991), O'Connell (1991) and Kyle & Kantowicz (1992) each discuss the factors leading up to Chicago School Reform and the basic features of this landmark legislation.

4. Hardin (1992) argues that individual and institutional trust problems may be conceptually related, but require different kinds of data or evidence for variable construction and in the statistical applications undertaken at various levels. We share some of Hardin's concerns and have, therefore, made conceptual and empirical distinctions between trust as formed through individual social relationships, such as the trust between teachers and parents, and trust as a quality of social institutions. This point is also made through the statistical techniques we employ in our empirical analyses.

5. While Coleman and Putnam are perhaps the most well-known for interpreting social trust in organizations, other sociologists have also described the value of trust for helping organizations conduct their work through its effects on cooperation (Kramer, 1993), building of social norms (Barber, 1983; Blau 1964), and social control (Sitkin and Stickel, 1996). The new, edited volume by Kramer and Tyler (1996) examines the formation of trust in a variety of public and private organizations.

6. The design for the Coordinated Field Case Study can be found in Bryk et al. (1992). Briefly, in Year One, in-depth interviews of approximately one and a half hours to two hours each were conducted with the principal and selected LSC and PPAC members. Based on nominations by the principal and chairs of the LSC and PPAC, two additional parents and two teachers were interviewed. Additionally, three individuals who emerged as centrally involved in school operations were also interviewed. A core set of questions concerned with school governance, leadership, local politics, and normative understanding of a good school, principal, and teacher were asked of all

respondents. Several specific questions were also constructed based on the respondent's role and relationship to the school; for example, a pastor in a local church who frequently participated in various school activities.

In addition to the interviews, in Year One, observations were conducted at LSC and PPAC meetings and special school events. In Year One, data collection included a total of 124 ($$ need to check numbers) interviews and over 100 hours of field observations. In Year Two, we included two more rounds of interviews with school leaders. New PPAC and LSC members were interviewed in the fall, and the principal and other selected school participants were re-interviewed in the spring. Focus groups with principals, teachers, and parents were also held. Finally, classroom observations in sample classes at the 12 schools were undertaken. As part of these observations, intensive interviews with the teachers were also conducted.

Our general ideas of trust were informed by all of these data sources. However, in formulating our theory of social trust, we relied specifically on Year One and Year Two interviews with all sample respondents and the second year teacher interviews. Our method for selecting quotes was based on compiling and analyzing answers to several different items relating to conceptions of a good school, including the roles of the principal, parents, and teachers, and relationships among teachers, principals, students, and parents at the school.

7. A similar conceptual argument is made by Callan (1996), who in a recent essay maintains that before a dialogue of care can occur, teachers and students need to form some basis of mutual trust and understanding (see p. 10). For extensive discussions of the importance and nature of care in schools, see Noddings (1991, 1992).

8. The teacher-principal relationship is clearly not symmetrical and could be conceived as hierarchical. Developing trust in hierarchical relationships has been examined by Kramer (1996). He suggests that in such relationships two distinct problems can occur. First, individuals in the lower status relationships have a fear of exploitation and being treated unfairly. Second, those in higher positions of authority fear that individuals for whom they are responsible may be shirking their responsibilities and engaging in acts that undermine the work of the organization. These reciprocal vulnerabilities and uncertainties that are inherent in hierarchical relationships can be lessened by trust relationships that create opportunities for jointly beneficial outcomes.

9. Conceptually, we might also choose to differentiate principal-parent relations from teacher-parent relations. Given that the work of principals and teachers is quite different, the norms underlying their relations with parents are also likely to vary. Given that the data primarily available to us for the empirical portion of this study are from the teachers' perspective, however, we chose not to elaborate this distinction at this point in time.

10. This idea of teaching as touching the soul is capture on Hartunian-Gordon's book on teaching practice (199x).

11. In a rating scale analysis the difficulty estimates are arbitrarily set to have a mean value of zero. This results in both positive and negative difficulty coefficients. Since the choice of location is arbitrary, this sign is meaningless.

12. For a properly fitting scale, the expected infit structure value is 1.0. Values larger than 1.0 indicate some degree of scale misfit; values exceeding 1.2 suggest significant misfit.

13. See Kramer, Brewer, and Hanna (1996) for a more general discussion of this hypothesis and the extant social-psychological research evidence that supports it. In general, they argue that organizational commitment is strongly dependent upon the trust that individuals have in the organization and its members.

14. Fukuyama (1985) makes a similar argument about worker behavior in firms.

15. Newmann and Wehlage (1995) argue that collective responsibility by teachers for student learning is a key component of organizational capacity in restructured schools. This was a key finding highlighted from the five years of research conducted by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.

16. Bryk and Driscoll (1988) documented the positive effects of small school size on student engagement and teacher commitment. See also Bryk et al. (1993) for research on the effectiveness of urban Catholic high schools. Small school size was identified as a key facilitating factor in the early implementation of Chicago school reform. See Easton et al. (1991); Bryk et al. (1993); and Sebring et al. (1995). It has also been documented as a key structural feature supporting successful school restructuring (Newmann and Wehlage, 1995). See also Smith and Lee (in prep.).

17. Sebring, Bryk, and Easton (1995) document the prevalence of such tensions in a small proportion of Chicago school communities. Although these animosities are not widespread, they do constitute a significant impediment to school improvement when present.

More generally, shared racial/ethnic identity forms a natural basis for trust relations. Kramer, Brewer, and Hanna (1996) argue that people tend, at least initially, to perceive members of their own group as trustworthy until counter evidence arises. Because of enhanced perceptions of similarity, individuals presume that other members of a collective will perceive a given situation in a similar way. Thus, common social group membership tends to support trust and highly differentiated membership tends to undermine it. The results reported in Sebring et al. (1995) are consistent with this general social-psychological theory.

18. Level 1 of the HLM is a measurement model. We introduce here information about the unreliability of each individual's measure, which is produced as part of the Rasch scaling. This allows us to remove from the analysis the variance component associated with measurement error in the outcome variable. Level 2 represents variation among

teachers within schools, and Level 3 represents variation across schools. From these statistics we can compute the proportion of variance that is between schools.

19. There remains substantial within-school variability that may be related to other unmeasured characteristics of teachers and their roles in the organization. This variability may also be a function of the informal social organization within the school (Frank, 1993).

20. See Bryk et al. (in preparation, chapter 6) on the experiences of actively restructuring schools. A facilitative, inclusive orientation was a common characteristic of principal leadership in the six-site core study. For a more general account of this phenomenon, see also Sergiovanni (1992). We should note that a reciprocal relation is also likely to exist. That is, when principals trust teachers and parents, they are more likely to devolve authority to them and include them in the critical affairs of the school. Unfortunately, no direct principal reports were available to test this hypothesis.

21. See Sebring et al. (1995), p. 58.

22. We reran the statistical models using the same set of student, teacher, and school controls, but now introduced an overall indicator of social trust, based on an average of the three separate measures.

23. The data for this comparison are drawn from Sebring et al. (1995), p. 42.

24. A distinct advantage of a Rasch Rating Scale analysis is that each measure can be directly related to expected responses on each of the individual survey items that comprise the measure (see Wright and Masters, 1982). This is a direct consequence of the hierarchical character of the scale and the fact that the goodness of fit statistics indicate that most individuals respond to item set as the scale lays out. We use this property of a rating scale analysis here to infer back from the computed measures for each teacher to the typical responses associated with these measures.

25. See the discussion in Bryk et al. (1993) on principal leadership in actively restructuring Chicago schools.

26. The essay by Green (1988) offers much inisght on this topic of the economy of virtue.

27. This is the principal conclusion of the book in preparation by Bryk et al. on the major lessons learned from the first five years of Chicago school reform.